

THE PIANO Adventures® TEACHER

FJH PEDAGOGY NEWSLETTER

Summer 2006 No. 8

Come to Your Senses!

**A Harmonic
Tapestry**

**Happy Birthday,
Mozart!**

More Software

**Those Little
Fingers ...**

**Sight-Reading
“Medicine”**



Faber Piano Institute

T H E
F · J · H
M U S I C
C O M P A N Y
I N C.
Frank J. Hackinson

THE PIANO ADVENTURES®
TEACHER

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The Piano Adventures® Teacher
is published three times a year by
The FJH Music Company Inc.
2525 Davie Road, Suite 360
Fort Lauderdale, FL 33317-7424

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From the Editor

BY MARIENNE USZLER

*K*inesthesia. What a descriptive (and musical-sounding!) word. Thank you, Greeks. Translated traditionally, it would be *cineesthesia*. There are two parts to the word. *Cineo* means “put in motion.” *Aesthesia* means “sensation.” So, *kinesthesia* is the awareness we have of motion, especially the motion, balance, position, and weight of our own bodies. We *feel* that we move and, if we pay attention, we can also monitor *how* we move.

Take a good look at our cover. Everyone’s in motion. That bell ringer is using a full arm to sound imaginary chimes. The whirling dervishes are spinning with energy and abandon. And those arms and hands are stretching to make the big drum “boom.” What does all this have to do with teaching someone to play the piano? It is activities like these that free and stimulate the body to feel and enjoy rhythm, that most internal and primal of all musical sensations.

In “An Invitation to the Dance,” a short essay in a program book for a play about dancers, Megan Monaghan comments on how closely connected we are to movement. “Our earliest experience *in utero* is the rhythmic sounds of a heartbeat, and we continue to respond to rhythm in joyful, physical ways throughout our lives—from public occasions such as wedding receptions to the spontaneous solo boogie in the kitchen or living room when a favorite song comes on the radio.”

Often when we play the piano—and when we teach someone to play—we concentrate too narrowly on motions made by the fingers, wrists, and arms. Sometimes, we even forget about the arms! But the whole body must be in involved—feet, seat, spine, lungs, shoulders, eyes, ears, mind, and heart. Only when you play as a whole person do you absorb the music, play it with ease and skill, and communicate what it means to others. If you don’t use your entire body, or if you ignore its feedback, you’re in trouble.

In this issue, Janet Palmberg reminds us of the importance of recognizing sensory modality preference. Each of us has a strong propensity to certain ways of relating to the external world, whether seeing, hearing, moving, touching, or feeling. Although we are drawn more to some, or one, of these modes, it is equally true that the more we respond to, or are stimulated by, multiple sensations the richer and deeper is the total experience.

Each student is an individual with certain learning preferences. Some students need to see

and be shown. Others are particularly sensitive to moods and feelings. Many students, especially young students, come alive chiefly through physical contact with whatever is out there. In our efforts to form rounded hand shapes, teach accurate reading, and instill careful counting habits, we sometimes overlook the most direct and natural ways to experience music, particularly rhythm. Big gestures and full-body activities awaken visceral responses to making, hearing, and enjoying music. And they’re fun!

As Randall Faber points out, the Level 5 *Piano Adventures*® books are designed to “strongly embed” the primary chords in the “student’s visual cortex.” Seeing chord and scale patterns and translating these to tactile experiences is what makes reading easy and playing more secure. Some students, however, “see” too much, or “look” only at details. Reducing the information load to essentials is not only comforting, it’s also the key to internalizing the information.

Seeing what’s important and translating that into hand shapes like chords and intervals connects sight and touch. Playing by “touch” is a useful skill, not only for those who are eager to get their hands on the keys and *do* something, but especially for those learners who tend to rely too heavily on visual information. Slipping and sliding with an assortment of seventh shapes and sounds is both “cool” and “handy” for pianists, as I suggest when teaching or learning Jazz Reflection. It’s a good thing to be a “touchy-feely” pianist!

Take another look at our action-oriented cover. The images of those high-spirited dancers and drummers bring us back to moving, seeing, feeling, and touching—to *kinesthesia*, in fact. Perhaps we should reflect on how much our own teaching puts students in contact with what it means to “feel” and make music. Is it possible that our teaching reflects *anaesthesia*, a lack of sensation? That would be numbing, indeed—both for us and for our students. So, off those piano benches. Swing, bend, sway, dance, drum—move!

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Back From Down Under

Nancy and Randall Faber just returned from Australia and New Zealand. Randall opened the six-city tour with a recital for parents, students, and teachers in the new Scots College performance hall in Melbourne. The Fabers closed the tour with an all-day workshop for teachers in the exquisitely renovated Sydney Conservatory. The tour celebrated the release of the International Edition of *Piano Adventures*® and the launch of the *Piano Adventures*® Gold Star Performance Books. The Gold Star series features listening CDs with vocals that highlight musical expression and aural skills. Visit www.PianoTeaching.com for audio samples.

Understanding Learning Style

BY JANET PALMBERG

No two piano students are alike. Each presents a unique collection of personality traits and learning preferences that poses a fascinating challenge to the piano teacher. In the words of Forrest Gump, “Life is like a box of chocolates. You never know what you’re gonna’ git.” Like a box of chocolates, piano students bring many surprises, but only if you are prepared to uncover them.

The concept of learning style is broad. In the piano teaching community, learning style discussion has mostly been associated with sensory modality preference, the idea being that one learns through the senses. In the educational community at large, however, learning style is also associated with personality type, perception style, and organizational style.

There are a number of systems that categorize personality types. For understanding personality types, I recommend the system developed by David Keirse and Marilyn Bates, a user-friendly system that divides personalities into only four types. Perception style and organizational style are easy to diagnose. A learner’s perception style is usually either concrete (learning best through hands-on activity) or abstract (learning best through thoughts, words, symbols, or numbers). A learner’s organizational style will probably be either sequential (preferring step-by-step instruction) or global (preferring the big picture).

The learner’s personality type and perception/organizational styles are important, but sensory modalities are most familiar to us as music educators since we deal with music listening, reading, performance, and interpretation on a regular basis. Piano teachers have historically identified these preferences as visual, auditory, or kinesthetic. A few recently developed systems additionally recognize the sensory modality preference of learning through touch and the emotions, known as tactual modality.

Analyzing Sensory Modality Preference

There is no evidence that individuals learn through only one sensory modality; rather, they may simply prefer one more than others. Students that learn best by seeing, watching, and reading prefer *visual modality*. *Auditory* modality is the preference of those that learn best by hearing, speaking, discussing, and thinking aloud. Moving and doing things is the preference of the *kinesthetic* learner, while the *tactual* learner accesses learning most easily through small motor muscles and emotion. (See Example 1)

Teaching to Sensory Modality Preference

Identifying the student’s sensory modality preference helps the piano teacher design efficient strategies for teaching skills and repertoire. The opening measures of “The Tempest” by Nancy Faber may be introduced in various ways, depending on the student’s modality preference. (See Example 2)

The *visual* learner could be shown the score and asked to analyze the key and chords before playing. The broken triads

could next be blocked to encourage seeing each triad as a group of three related notes, rather than as three individual notes. When working with the *auditory* learner, the teacher could perform the opening without the student viewing the score. The student could then be asked to talk about what was heard. The *kinesthetic* learner could experience the piece with large muscle movement by moving one arm through the air in the shape of a rainbow for each phrase heard (in this example, two phrases). The *tactual* learner could be asked to name an adjective that describes the opening of the piece, thus facilitating an immediate emotional connection to the music. Both the *kinesthetic* learner and *tactual* learner would enjoy being shown how to play the first two measures, then immediately trying to play these measures themselves.

Thus the piece is first approached through the student’s preferred modality. The teaching process should, however, move quickly to accessing other modalities. I will use the *kinesthetic* learner as an example. After connecting to the performed piece through large muscle movement and playing the first two measures by rote, the student could then be asked to create a written, visual picture (sometimes known as an abstract) of what was played. The resulting abstract might appear as in Example 3.

Finally, after playing from the self-created abstract, the student would be fully equipped to confidently read the actual score. Further, recognition of the triadic and chordal shapes found in “The Tempest” would easily transfer to reading similar patterns and shapes in other pieces.

The above suggestions pertain to emphasizing one sensory modality at a time. Research has shown that experiences combining more than one modality at the same time, or *multisensory* experiences, can result in even better retention, while at the same time serving to strengthen weaker modalities. This is due, at least in part, to the storage and linking of experience in more than one part of the brain.

Continuing with the example of “The Tempest,” the *visual* learner could combine the visual and auditory modalities by speaking the chord names while playing the blocked chords from the score. The *auditory* learner could draw a “picture” of the sound as the teacher plays the piece. The *kinesthetic* learner could count beats aloud as the rainbows are shaped in the air. In doing so, the learner will discover that some musical units in the piece are eight counts long (as in the first phrase), while other units are shorter or longer. The *tactual* learner could view the score while searching for words describing the music.

If you have ever wondered why some students seem easier to teach than others, it may be because these students’ learning styles are similar to yours. Research has confirmed that students learn most readily from teachers with similar learning preferences. We owe it to our students to teach in ways that suit *their* learning styles, not ours, and make learning to play the piano a comfortable and celebratory experience.

EXAMPLE 1 Observation of student behavior can provide clues to a student's sensory modality preference. The chart lists some characteristics of each type of learner.

	VISUAL	AUDITORY	KINESTHETIC	TACTUAL
PHYSIOLOGY	Limited body movement	Rhythmic movement Clicking sounds with mouth or tongue	Active body movement	Unpredictable
SPEECH PATTERNS	Rapid pace Concise language	Moderate pace Even flow	Slow pace	Moderate pace Uneven flow
SPEECH PREDICATES	Visual ("see")	Aural ("hear" or "sounds good")	Active ("I get it")	Emotional ("feels great")
EYE MOVEMENTS	Up to left or right	Lateral to left or right	Down	Random
INFORMATION RETRIEVAL	Able to recall information randomly and quickly	Clings to sequence Likes to start at the "beginning"	Prefers to recall information sequentially rather than randomly	Able to recall information randomly
MUSIC READING	Learns to read quickly	Learns to read more slowly than the visual learner	Learns to read more slowly than the visual learner	Able to read music with emotional connections more easily
OTHER	Likes variety in environment Attends to detail	Likes to sing along or "sub-vocalize" à la Glenn Gould	Wants to try out a new piece as soon as possible	Likes to play only pieces with which the student connects emotionally

EXAMPLE 2

[Measures 1-4 of *The Tempest*, *Piano Adventures*®, Performance, Level 3B]

The Tempest
Key of ____ major/minor (circle)
N. Faber

Allegro furioso® (♩ = 100 - 108)

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EXAMPLE 3

The Tempest, *Piano Adventures*®, Performance Level 3B, measures 1 and 2

Play the first four A Minor triads in broken form, all others in blocked form.

	Am (RH)	D	D	Am
		4th	4th	
		Dm6	Dm6	Am
		4	4	
Am (LH)				
Am (RH)				
Am (LH)				

Resources

Bruckner, Susan. *The Whole Musician: A Multi-Sensory Guide to Practice, Performance and Pedagogy*. Santa Cruz, CA: Effey Street Press, 1997.

Dunn, Rita & Dunn, Kenneth. *Teaching students through their individual learning styles: A practical approach*. Reston, VA: Reston, 1978.

Keirse, David and Bates, Marilyn. *Please Understand Me II: Temperament, Character, and Intelligence*. Del Mar, CA: Prometheus Publishers, 1998.

Performance Learning Systems, Inc. <http://www.plsweb.com> (online education company)

Wolfe, Patricia. *Brain Matters: Translating Research into Classroom Practice*. Alexandria, VA: Association for Supervision & Curriculum Development, 2001. ■■■

The Pedagogy of Piano Adventures

Level 5: The I-IV-V Tapestry

BY RANDALL FABER

I considered entitling this article The I-IV-V Harmonic Grid. Such a title aptly conveys the concept—a grid of primary chords in all inversions branded across the keyboard and strongly embedded in the student's visual cortex. Though I appreciate the solidness and certainty invoked by this industrial image, we might instead consider the softer word “tapestry.” As we read and create music, we weave through the I-IV-V tapestry of primary chords. At Level 5, we ensure that the student can see and feel this structural tapestry for each tonal piece.

Scales

“Why learn scales?” students ask. Our answer? A scale reduces 88 keys to seven. Five keys are eliminated in each octave (12 chromatic tones minus five leaves seven diatonic scale steps), and each of these seven tones retains its own meaning regardless of octave. So when playing the Pachelbel Canon in D, for instance, we can ignore one third of the keys on the keyboard and visualize a simple thread of the D major scale weaving through seven tones per octave, across the entire keyboard. Whether reading or improvising, attention is delimited to this D major thread for security, predictability, and confidence.

Consider When the Sun Rises ... from the Level 5 Lesson Book (p. 36). The piece is essentially an “improvisation” in B-flat major, excepting a brief color detour with the A-flat in measures 6-9. By delimiting the keyboard to the notes of the B-flat major scale, and imagining this “scale thread” of two black keys interspersed with five white keys, the piece becomes easy to read and easy to play. Furthermore, there is little chance of a bad note sounding because the scale tones all relate to the tonality.

Sound Check:

Is your L.H. playing softly while your R.H. “sings” the melody?

When the Sun Rises...

N. Faber

Allegretto (♩ = 92-100) *cantabile*

The last three measures of this piece offer opportunity for improvisation. Taking the short rhythmic motive given, explore any tones from the B-flat major “thread.” It is surprising to see—and to hear—how easy this can be.

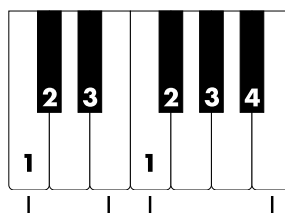
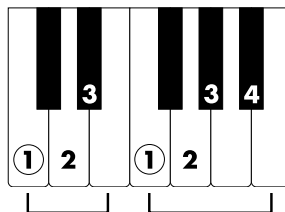
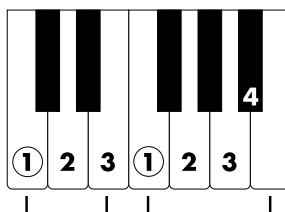
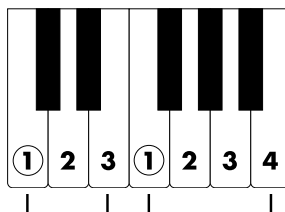


Write I, IV, or V to show the harmony in measures 10-15.

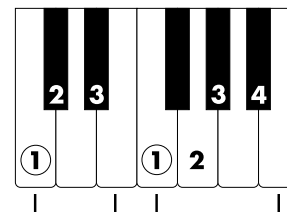
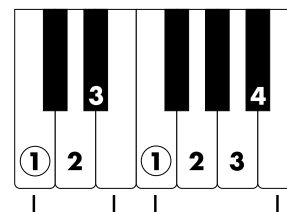
Well, yes, there is that issue of fumbled fingering. Fortunately, the flat-key scales give special opportunity to simplify fingering, which is why we devote Level 5 to the flat key signatures. Here's the rule:

For RH flat-key scales, the thumb plays on C and F

So we always have RH fingers 1-2-3 on C-D-E, and fingers 1-2-3-4 on F, G, A, B.



Without shifting this image, let's flat the B under finger 4. Now also flat the E in the 3-finger pattern up from C. Now add A-flat to the 4-finger pattern. Back to the 3-finger pattern for D-flat, etc. And so we go around the flat side of the circle of 5ths: C-F-Bb-Eb-Ab-Db-Gb.



In every case, the RH fingering is consistent: three fingers built up from C, and four fingers built up from F. Work this over in blocked fashion—three fingers, four fingers—without beginning on the actual

keynote. Then block it out in this same fashion, but going up several octaves. Now play the actual scale. (It's not really important which finger plays the black key opening tonic.)

With this fingering in mind, let's revisit *When the Sun Rises* and improvise on measure 6, where we find an A-flat chord over the B-flat pedal point. Place RH fingers over C-D-Eb and/or F-G-Ab-Bb and improvise over the LH ostinato. One might return to B-flat major accompanied by the opening ostinato. Also consider exploring alternative scale passages modeled after those in measures 13 and 14. We composed these scale passages to begin with thumb on F (measure 13) and thumb on C (measure 14) to reinforce the flat-key fingering rule. In improvising, one might use the prescribed hand placements, but begin on any note.

Carillon Fantasia (p. 42) orients to the key of E-flat with thumb placement on F. The piece alternates between motivic thirds and motivic seconds, acquainting the student with the look and feel of E-flat major.

Carillon Fantasia

Fast, joyous ($\text{♩} = 84-92$) L.H. over R. Faber

Chord Etudes

Scales are invaluable, but it is the combining of scale tones in thirds that gives tonal music its harmonic structure. Recalling our metaphor, we use the scale "thread" to weave the chord tapestry. First and foremost, we weave the tapestry of I, IV, and V chords—in all inversions.

As Level 5 begins to progress through various keys, each piece is preceded by a short etude, disguised by a title. *Coral Reef Etude*, for example, opens the book as a primary-chord study in C, featuring all inversions of I, IV, and V.

To maximize the effectiveness of this and similar etudes:

- Play by memory. Encourage students to look at their hands for these etudes so that the keyboard patterns are visually imprinted.
- Play with eyes closed. Highlight the feel of the keys and the feel of the thirds and fourths.
- Transpose. Use *Coral Reef Etude* as a generic warm-up for every piece, in any key, whether major or minor.

Coral Reef Etude is the harmonic grid, the primary-chord tapestry. It is essential for the student to grasp these chord pat-

A **triad** is a 3-note chord built in 3rds.

All major and minor chords and their inversions are triads.

Play these I, IV, and V triads, naming them aloud: **tonic, subdominant, and dominant.**

Coral Reef Etude

(Inversion Study in C)

Flowing ($\text{♩} = 76-88$) C

DISCOVERY

Transpose *Coral Reef Etude* to the Key of G major.

In the Key of G: the tonic is ____, the subdominant is ____, the dominant is ____.

terns that combine the student's understanding of primary chords with understanding of chord inversions. This is the bridge to the intermediate repertoire.

Notice that *Blue Etude* (p. 11) is a primary-chord etude in F, preparing for *Tumbleweed Blues* (p. 12). Similarly, *Rolling River Etude* (p. 14) drills the primary chords in A major using the LH pattern of *Shenandoah* (p. 15). As the student progresses to new keys, come back to *Blue Etude*, transposing, for example, to B-flat (especially for those pre-jazzers who will be playing in B-flat with brass players). Revisit *Rolling River Etude* as preparation for the pieces in C minor and G minor when these are encountered later in the book.

Popular Repertoire

A look at *Piano Adventures® Popular Repertoire Level 5* gives insight into the importance of chord comprehension. Consider Elton John's *Candle in the Wind*. The entire verse (Mm. 5-20) simply alternates between I and IV chords (G and C in the key of G major). Yet, how many students fail to recognize this simple chord pattern and struggle to decode 150 notes instead of two chords? So we pair the arrangement with an "Accompanying Activity" that drills I-IV chords in a pop accompaniment style. The arrangement then reduces to simplicity.

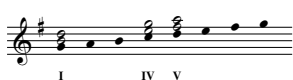
In a different context, we again explore the repetition of I



ACCOMPANYING ACTIVITY

Chords in the Wind

These are the primary chords
(I, IV, V) in the Key of G:



Each can be played in any inversion.



The most common chord change in popular music is the shift between I and IV chords.

Below is a two-hand accompaniment that alternates between I and IV chords.
Practice and memorize it using all three R.H. inversions, as shown.



Transpose the above to the Keys of C, D, E, F, and A.

1323

11

and IV in Wind Beneath My Wings. The corresponding activity, titled "The Bass Beneath My Wings," explores aural recognition of the bass line and various accompaniments for the I-IV chord progression.

The Power of Primary Chords

In the Level 2B article (*The Piano Adventures® Teacher*, March, 2004, No. 4, pp. 5-7), we discussed "The Power of Primary Chords." Indeed, one can't overestimate the value of recognizing fundamental harmonies—for reading, for memorization, and for musical creativity. We recapitulate this concept here at Level 5 by weaving an elementary understanding of primary chords into a patterned "I-IV-V Tapestry" by including chord inversions.

The warm-up etudes in *Piano Adventures®* Level 5 provide some very effective tools. But learning the etudes once, in the key written, will not make a real musician. We need to roll up our sleeves and help students transpose these etudes to many, if not all, keys. Do so in conjunction with learning each new scale and each new piece. With this higher expectation, we can indeed develop a Harmonic Grid that is "industrial-strength." Or, if you prefer the softer metaphor, a "I-IV-V Tapestry" that won't fade by next week's lesson. ■■■

PIANO

Adventures®

by Nancy and Randall Faber

Level 5 Piano Adventures®



Lesson Book FF1093

At Level 5, the student develops familiarity with the primary chords in all inversions while playing robust, showy pieces. Flat key signatures and harmonic progressions based on the descending 5th are featured.



Theory Book FF1094

Along with essential writing activities, the Theory Book presents sight-reading and ear-training instruction for each unit.



Performance Book FF1095

This engaging and expressive collection of pieces offers a varied repertoire while reinforcing the Lesson Book concepts.



Popular Repertoire FF1323

Appealing popular standards are arranged to reinforce the concepts of the level. Each selection is paired with an Activity Page that addresses harmony, rhythm, ear-training, or other important musical skill.



AdvanceTime Piano Christmas FF1124

This delightful collection of Christmas and winter holiday favorites features arrangements by the Fabers which sparkle with bravura and expression. "AdvanceTime" designates Level 5, following the BigTime Piano series in difficulty.

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PIANO ADVENTURES®

SETTING THE STANDARD FOR THE 21ST CENTURY

Let's Slide Those Sevenths

BY MARIENNE USZLER

All pianists like to play sevenths. They sound lush, full, sophisticated, easygoing—in a word, suave.

For younger pianists, playing sevenths is often more comfortable than playing octaves. And this piece is “seventh heaven.”

Left Hand

Play the left-hand jazz warm-up as suggested, with pedal. Notice how the hand shape needs to adjust, depending on the key-color combination.

When the seventh is:

- Two white keys: fingers 1 and 5 pair easily
- Two black keys: fingers 1 and 5 play near the bottom edges of the keys
- Black key bottom, white key top: thumb plays close to the black keys
- White key bottom, black key top: Finger 5 slides up to play almost in the middle of the white key.

Adjusting the hand shape is important. You never need to twist your wrist.

This prepares you to play all the measures in the piece with open sevenths.

Block the sevenths with second-finger “fill-ins,” as in Mm. 6-9.

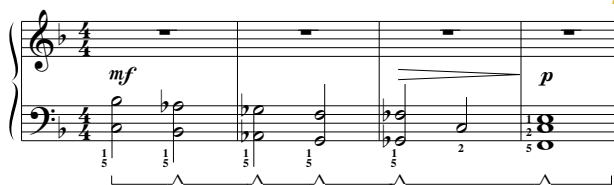
Again, adjust your hand shapes as the outer notes play on black/white keys.

Then, whether the sevenths are played blocked or broken in the piece, your hand will be ready and it will be comfortable.

Review Piece

Sevenths are commonly used in jazz. Practice left-hand 7ths with this jazz warm-up.

Jazz Warm-up



Jazz Reflection

Freely, with expression (♩ = 100-108)

N. Faber

4

FF1093

Performance p. 2

Right Hand

Block the lowest and highest notes in Mm. 1-4. You'll discover that they're sevenths, too!

Adjust your hand shapes as you did for the left-hand sevenths. Stay comfortable ... don't twist your wrists.

Now block everything but the second eighth-note in Mm. 1-4. These are also sevenths with second-finger “fill-ins.”

Keep your comfortable hand shapes!

Melody

Play Mm. 5-12 (begin with the pickup in the preceding measure) with the right hand and pedal.

10

13

16

18

DISCOVERY

Point out a pattern and sequence in this piece.

FF1093

Compare the LH in Mm. 1-5 and Mm. 13-17.

What's the same? What's different?

There's a great deal of slipping and sliding going on! The more you really slide from position to position, the "cooler" you'll sound.

Your Own Reflection

Slide your left hand down in 7ths, from C to C.

Play rather slowly, changing the pedal after you play each 7th. (See example 1 below)

Add a fourth above your LH thumb. Slide both hands from C to C, playing and pedaling in the same way. Can you do this with your eyes closed?

(See example 2 below)

Now add an upper (or lower) neighbor to the RH note. Play as if you were improvising a quiet meditation.

Create your own reflection! (See example 3 below) III

From *Piano Adventures* Lesson Book Level 5, pp. 4, 5

Wherever there is a chord, voice only the top note as the melody. Play Mm. 17-19 the same way.

Throughout the entire piece, make sure the top notes in the right hand (including *both* eighth notes) sing out over the harmonies that are blended by the pedal per measure.

Slip and Slide

Jazz Reflection is loaded with patterns and sequences.

Compare the RH in Mm. 1-5 and Mm. 13-17. What's the same? What's different?

Compare the LH in Mm. 1-5 and Mm. 6-9. What's the same? What's different?

Example 1

Example 2

Example 3

Let's Celebrate Mozart

BY MARIENNE USZLER

Happy Birthday, Wolfgang!

This is the year to join in the world-wide celebration of the 250th anniversary of Mozart's birthday. There are bound to be Mozart performances somewhere near you, whether these are symphonies, concertos, operas, recitals, choral concerts, or chamber music programs. There is good reason to celebrate and much music from which to choose. It is truly astounding how many remarkable and beautiful compositions Mozart produced in his very short lifetime. Even more noteworthy is the fact that he wrote brilliantly in every form and medium popular in his day, something not true even of Haydn or Beethoven.

The Source

This Minuet is included in *The Notebook for Nannerl*. Originally begun by Leopold Mozart for Wolfgang's sister, this collection is much like those compiled by Bach in the *Notebooks for Wilhelm Friedemann* and *Anna Magdalena*. It contains music by Leopold, Wolfgang (copied by his father), and more difficult works by then-contemporary composers such as Wagenseil, Tischer, and Agrell. A few of the anonymous pieces are

now credited to Leopold. Wolfgang's earliest compositions, written when he was five, are included. We will never know how completely "original" these small works are since they survive only in Leopold's hand.

A Maverick Minuet

Although it's dance-like, this Minuet sounds almost like an improvisation. In the first half, there are three ideas, each in a different style. The first four measures contain a hidden duet between the right hand and bass line, but the music gives a skipping impression as the hands "tip toe" back and forth. In measure 5, the duet melody (still hidden) begins to glide more smoothly, impelled by the rocking legato bass. The section ends with a flourish (is the lady swishing her skirts?) and a proper curtsy.

What adds spontaneity to these three ideas is the number of

24

In the first three measures of this early Mozart minuet, both hands have equal say in presenting the melody. The lower voice leads and the right hand plays catch up! Keep the thumb light in the left hand. At measure 5, the melodic interest shifts to the upper voice. Many large intervals make up the second half of the minuet.

Minuet in F Major

(from *The Notebook for Nannerl*, K. 6)

WOLFGANG AMADEUS MOZART
(1756–1791)

Allegretto (♩ = 100–112)

measures allotted to them. The first two are expressed in four measures each. We anticipate another pair of balanced four-measure phrases, or at least another single idea of four measures. Instead we're surprised by a two-measure twirl-and-curtsy.

The second half opens with another rocking motif, now in the right hand. It arches up, then steps down primly as the bass line comes to meet it in contrary motion. Transposed repetitions of the second and third ideas follow, diverted by—another surprise—a deceptive cadence in measure 20. The final measures are Mozart's way of saying, "This is the four-measure round off you were expecting the first time!"

Discover the Melodies

Shape the phrases by playing the melodic lines as a duet. In Mm. 1-4, play the lines together, skipping all the left-hand Cs,

before playing the notes as written. In Mm. 5-8, again skip all the left-hand Cs and also the repeated right-hand eighth notes. (When you put the right-hand repeated notes back in, just shake them out of your sleeve.) The graceful duet can then be shaped in four-measure phrases. Be ready to move your right-hand fingers in Mm. 9 and 10. Switching from the thumb to the second finger on the repeated Bs will help you play these notes cleanly. Play through all the sixteenth notes in the last group with a gentle crescendo to the dissonant B in measure 10.

Work out the second half in the same way. First shape the duet lines, then insert all the repeated notes. Make a crescendo through Mm. 17 and 18 into the sixteenth notes in measure 19. This is the highest point in the dance, and the deceptive cadence in measure 20 will be a dramatic surprise. Let the sixteenth-note groups that follow taper off to the final, polite curtsy.

More About Mozart

Use this anniversary celebration to expand your knowledge of Mozart. The Internet offers some interesting experiences. Here are a few attractive websites and what they offer.

A Sightseeing Tour

www.pbs.org/wnet/gper/shows/mozart250/multimedia/hotspots.html

See • Buildings and places important in Mozart's life

Read • Brief commentary that explains the Mozart connection

An Abundance of Treats

www.npr.org

Check Music in the left column
Then scan down the right-hand column to click on Mozart's 250th.

Hear • Leif Ove Andsnes play with the Vienna Philharmonic
• Mitsuko Uchida discuss what it means to perform Mozart
• Music Mozart wrote trying to find work in Salzburg
• About the women in Mozart's life
• The little birthday song that Mozart wrote for a boy named Frederick and much more ...

Got Dice?

<http://sunsite.univie.ac.at/Mozart/dice/#about>

Mozart wrote a musical dice game (Musikalisches Würfelspiel, K516f). It was published shortly after his death. The idea was to throw dice to choose measures that could be combined to create a classical minuet.

See • A table with 176 Minuet measures and 96 Trio measures

• Rules for using your dice to create a Minuet and Trio
Hear • The Minuet(s) you compose!

In His Own Hand

www.bl.uk/collections/treasures/mozart_broadband.html

Mozart kept a record of his compositions in the last seven years of his life.

You can • Learn about Mozart's Thematic Catalogue
• Open the book, page by page
• Read a translation of what's on every page
• See Mozart's writing by magnifying the text
• Hear what's on every page. ■■■

From *Focus on Melody*, Volume 1, page 24

Selected and Edited by Suzanne Guy and Victoria McArthur

TEACHING PIANO PEDAGOGY

Rx for Sight-Reading Blues

BY ELIZABETH GUTIERREZ

Diagnosis The student is quite adept at performing Beethoven's *Sonata in C Minor*, op. 13, yet is unable to sight read a Level 3 piano piece with fluency and ease.

Prescription ???

Teachers encounter this problem more often than not, and even more alarming is how the gap between performance skill and sight-reading ability becomes increasingly wider as students progress into the higher levels. Some will say there simply isn't enough time in the lesson for ongoing development of sight reading or feel at a loss for a solution to what seems a hopeless situation.

Measured Doses

The first step towards rehabilitating reading skill is to place sight reading back into the student's curriculum immediately. Lack of attention to reading music "on the spot" is perhaps the key reason more students aren't better readers. Sight-reading practice, when administered in small, measured doses over time *will* bring about noticeable improvement.

First, find the student's "comfort zone" for sight reading. This will be a level that is considerably easier than the student's performance repertoire and should contain only those musical concepts that the student can readily comprehend and interpret with a fair degree of fluency. This includes musical signs and symbols, not merely notes and rhythms.

"Prepared" sight reading

Assign a short excerpt for the student to sight read each day at home. Begin with four-measure segments and gradually increase the difficulty and/or length as the student improves. If rhythmic ability is especially weak, have the student count and clap the excerpt before playing. *Always* have the student count aloud when sight reading, while maintaining a comfortable steady tempo. The student should play the assigned daily excerpt only once. At the next lesson the student will play one of the assigned excerpts selected randomly by the teacher. (The Eye-Training excerpts from *Piano Adventures*® Theory Books work well for this activity.)

"Prima vista" sight reading

Every third or fourth lesson, have the student read a short excerpt for you at "first sight." Guide the student through a pre-scan of the material, always asking him to describe all the elements to be interpreted—dynamics, fingering, phrasing, and so on. This prepares the student to create a more complete and satisfying sound picture.

"Portion" reading

When introducing new material in a lesson, always have the student sight read at least a portion of it. Some familiarity with a new piece will make home practice easier, and it assures the teacher that a basic understanding is already underway.

Booster Shots

Be prepared to spike sight-reading accuracy with booster shots in rhythm, intervals, ear training, technique, and theory. Again, the Eye-Training and Ear-Training exercises in *Piano Adventures*®

offer numerous activities centered on rhythmic detection, rhythm clap-backs, melodic pattern recognition, transposition, and so forth. Often the problem isn't that a student can't read; he or she may not have a firm grasp on such essentials as:

- reading by intervallic contour, patterns, and groups of notes
- tactile security with the keyboard in order to navigate without looking down
- rhythmic accuracy and quick recognition of rhythmic patterns
- awareness of key areas through scales, chords, progressions, and cadences

Center remedial activities on these elements as needed and it will greatly facilitate the reading process while ensuring a smoother pathway to increased musical literacy.

Alternative Treatments

Variety always keeps things interesting. A few fun-filled studio activities and challenges will spark motivation and help you accomplish some reading goals along the way.

Create more ensemble experiences. Schedule back-to-back lessons for two students of similar level, and overlap the lesson times so that they can work on duets and sight reading. An occasional group class for four students (two pianos) could also be devoted to reading four-hand or eight-hand music at sight. Assign some of the music ahead of time so students learn how important preparation is to team success.

Increase music literacy with a sight-reading contest. Set up an award system for those students who read the most measures of music in a given semester. This type of assignment will enrich a student's background and breed further interest in music.

Set up a sight-reading lab. A digital keyboard (with headset) located elsewhere in the studio can become a sight-reading station where students work on independent sight-reading assignments. Let them select some of their favorite styles from your library and keep a log on their progress.

Plan a sight-reading festival. Make it a multi-studio event shared with your colleagues and add other related skills like scales, arpeggios, transposition, and so on as additional events. Allow students to select a level of difficulty for individual events and award points based on the quality of an individual's performance.

While short-term performance goals are especially important for student motivation, the long-term goal of life-long enjoyment at the piano should also remain a primary objective. After the studio teacher has faded into history, a good sight reader will always receive great satisfaction from reading all kinds of music and learning selected choices quickly and independently. ■■■

Elizabeth Gutierrez is Associate Professor of Piano and Coordinator of the Keyboard Area at the University of Texas at San Antonio and also serves as Piano Editor for Carl Fischer and the Theodore Presser music companies. She performs extensively as a soloist and chamber musician and presents numerous workshops, conferences, and master classes throughout the U.S. and abroad.

TALKING TECH

Software for Levels 3A and 3B

BY SANDRA BOWEN

In the last two newsletters, I've been talking about software that complements the early levels of *Piano Adventures*®. Programs that discuss and drill notes, keys, and note values abound. Even more whimsical programs in the edutainment market help with these early concepts. But in Levels 3A and 3B, we get into the nuts and bolts of music theory. Now it's all about scales and chords, with a little syncopation thrown in to spice things up.

The most useful programs for the early intermediate level:

- Essentials of Music Theory (Alfred)
- Music Lessons I and II (MiBAC)
- Musition 2 (Sibelius)
- PBJ Computer Activities (PBJ Music)
- Practica Musica (Ars Nova)

Other software that supports the teaching principles of Levels 3A and 3B:

- Interactive Musician (Alfred)
- Juilliard Music Adventure (Theatrix)
- Keyboard Chords and Keyboard Intervals (ECS)
- Music Ace 2 (Harmonic Vision)
- Music Goals by Eye and Ear, Music Goals Rhythm (Singing Electron)
- Music Skills Builder (ECS)
- Musicianship Basics (New Horizons)
- Scales and Key Signatures (Maestro Music)

Each of these programs is available for Windows and Macintosh, except for Music Goals and Musition which support only Windows.

Concepts Presented in Level 3A	
3/8 and 6/8	Sevenths
Triplets	Arpeggios
Chromatic scale	Key of D Major

3/8 and 6/8 Time Signatures

Essentials of Music Theory/Volume 2/Unit 11: Lessons 43, 44
 Music Ace 2: Lesson 23
 Musicianship Basics/Level 23
 Musition 2/Music Reading/Meter Recognition/Levels 2, 5
 PBJ Computer Activities/Level 2: Lesson 7
 Practica Music/Activity 3/Level 2
 Practica Music/Activity 4/Level 2
 Practica Music/Activity 15/Level 2

Triplets

Essentials of Music Theory/Volume 2/Unit 11: Lesson 45
 Music Goals Rhythm
 Musicianship Basics: Lesson 43

Chromatic Scale

Essentials of Music Theory/Volume 2/Unit 8: Lesson 32

Sevenths

Essentials of Music Theory/Volume 2/Unit 8: Lesson 33
 Keyboard Intervals/Spelling and Keyboard Drills
 Music Ace 2: Lesson 22
 Music Goals by Eye and Ear
 Music Lessons I/Drills/Intervals/Level-Beginning
 Music Skill Builder/Intervals
 Musition 2/Key Centres/Intervals/Level 5
 PBJ Computer Activities/Level One: Lesson 4
 PBJ Computer Activities/Level Two: Lesson 3

Arpeggios

Musicianship Basics/Levels 17, 24

Key of D Major

Essentials of Music Theory/Volume 2/Unit 7: Lesson 27

Concepts Presented in Level 3B	
Minor Scale	12 Major and Minor Triads
Syncopation	Triad Inversions
Sixteenth Notes	Motive and Sequence

Minor Scale

Essentials of Music Theory/Volume 3/Unit 14: Lesson 56
 Interactive Musician/Pitch /Scale/Advanced Options-Customizing Scales/Aeolian
 Interactive Musician/Pitch /Scale/Advanced Options-Customizing Scales/Harmonic Minor
 Music Ace 2: Lesson 19
 Music Lessons I/Drill-Major/Minor Scales/Level-Natural Minor Scales
 Music Lessons I/Drill-Major/Minor Scales/Level-Harmonic Minor Scales
 Music Skill Builder/Major and Minor Scales/Options
 Musition 2/Key Centres/Scales /Levels 1, 2
 PBJ Computer Activities/Level 3: Lesson 3
 Practica Musica/Activity 9/Levels 2, 3
 Scales and Key Signatures/Scales/Natural or Harmonic Minor

Motive and Sequence

Juilliard Music Adventure/Level 1/Princess' Room
 PBJ Computer Activities/Level 2: Lesson 10
 PBJ Computer Activities/Level 4: Lesson 10

Major and Minor Triads

Essentials of Music Theory /MAJOR/Volume 2/Unit 12: Lessons 47, 48

Essentials of Music Theory/MINOR/Volume 3/Unit 14:
Lesson 58

Interactive Musician/Pitch/Chord /Triads

Keyboard Chords/Spelling and Keyboard Drills/Root
Position

Music Skill Builder/Major and Minor Triads

Musition 2/Music Reading/Chord Recognition/Level 1

PBJ Computer Activities/Preparatory Level: Lesson 7

PBJ Computer Activities/Level 1: Lesson 7

PBJ Computer Activities/Level 2: Lesson 4

PBJ Computer Activities/Level 3: Lesson 5

Practica Musica/Activity 10/Level 1

Practica Musica/Activity 11/Level 1

Practica Musica/Activity 12 /Level 1

Triad Inversions

Essentials of Music Theory/Volume 3/Unit 13: Lessons 51, 52

Keyboard Chords/Triads/Spelling and Keyboard Drills/1st
and 2nd Inversions

Musition 2/Music Reading/Chord Recognition/Level 2

PBJ Computer Activities/Level 3: Lesson 6

PBJ Computer Activities/Level 4: Lesson 6

Practica Musica/Activity 10/Level 3

Practica Musica/Activity 11/Level 3

Practica Musica/Activity 12/Level 3

Syncopation

Essentials of Music Theory/Volume 2/Unit 11: Lesson 46

Music Ace 2: Lesson 17

Music Goals Rhythm

Practica Musica/Activity 3/Level 3

Practica Musica/Activity 4/Level 3

Practica Musica/Activity 15/Level 3

Sixteenth Notes

Essentials of Music Theory/Volume 2/Unit 10: Lesson 39

Music Ace 2: Lesson 18

Music Goals Rhythm

Where To Find the Software

Alfred

www.alfredpublishing.com/frameset.cfm?sub=software

Ars Nova

www.ars-nova.com

ECS

www.ecsmedia.com

Harmonic Vision

www.harmonicvision.com

Maestro Music

www.wrldcon.com/maestro/

MiBAC

www.mibac.com

New Horizons

<http://users.dragnet.com.au/~donovan/mb/music.html>

PBJ

www.pbjmusic.com

Sibelius

www.sibelius.com/products/musition/

Singing Electron

www.musicgoals.com

Theatrix (for Juilliard)

Out of print, but available many places—just Google!

You don't have an exhaustive software library? Where should you start?

Theory Comprehension

This category is a showdown between Harmonic Vision's *Music Ace* and Alfred's *Essentials of Music Theory*. Both programs are visually appealing and tutorial (not merely drill-and-practice), and each tests the user on the information presented. *Music Ace* follows each lesson with a challenging game; *EMT* concludes each unit with a review quiz.

What about cost? *Music Ace Maestro*, which includes *Music Ace* and *Music Ace 2* with Maestro Manager, lists for \$127.95. (You can still purchase *Music Ace* and *Music Ace 2* separately at \$49.95 each, but Maestro has put the lessons in sequential order and added significant management options.) *EMT*, Educator Version, including all three volumes, retails for \$199.99. Both programs include extensive teacher management options, but *Music Ace* includes 48 lessons and games while *EMT* features 75 lessons in 18 units, each with a review quiz. Both programs are available for Windows or Macintosh.

Ear Training

Music Ace and *EMT* provide extensive ear-training lessons

so you don't have to purchase specific ear-training software. *EMT*, in particular, includes an ear-training section in each unit. I like this feature—the ear training follows the instruction, so the concept is reinforced on the spot.

If you want more ear-training experience for your students, you can augment these programs with either Trail Creek Systems' *Ear Training Expedition* (www.trailcreeksystems.com) or Adventus' *Ear Training Coach* (www.adventus.com). *Ear Training Expedition* is a recently updated theory and ear-training program in three volumes, each priced individually at \$79.95 or \$199.95 for the set. *Ear Training Coach* is an appealing program in five volumes of two levels each. Levels 1-2 and 3-4 are available now for \$29.95 each, with Levels 5-6, 7-8, and 9-10 coming soon. Sorry, Mac users, both of these programs are Windows only.

Exploration

Use what you've learned! This choice is easy—the one and only *Juilliard Music Adventure* from Theatrix. Let your students explore the castle and put their newly honed skills to work helping the dragon, saving the queen, and returning music to the kingdom! With just a little Googling, you can find it for as little as \$9! Win/Mac. ■■■

BY MARIENNE USZLER

My own little fingers began with that horizontal red book. I played my favorites with zest—Steam-boat Round the Bend (loved those “chugs”), The Juggler (showing off with quick hand crossings), and—the winner—From a Wigwam (the left-hand tom-toms and three notes together!). I colored the pictures, read the information, and zipped through the book. I don’t recall being daunted by “Something New Every Lesson.” You could move to the next book in a hurry!



TO THE TEACHER

HOW TO PRESENT THE FIRST THREE LESSONS IN TEACHING LITTLE FINGERS TO PLAY

When children are given their first lessons in playing and singing, **PLAY A TUNE** during the first few moments of the first lesson that comes to them to learn to play music as well as to sing any play-tune later. Remember, the **adaptability of RHYTHM** to the **variety of vocal parts** is the **key-note** of the method. The **variety of vocal parts** is the **key-note** of the method. The **variety of vocal parts** is the **key-note** of the method.

The following procedure, if carefully studied, will enable you to make **MUSIC FIFTY MINUTES** after the **first lesson** and by the **fourth lesson** have to **PLAY MUSIC BY NOTE**.

FIRST LESSON

The musical examples in the first three lessons are to be taught **UNPLANNED** by RHYTHM. The purpose is to teach the NAMES OF THE KEYS ONLY. The notes will be learned later.

1. **First Lesson** (10 minutes) — **PLAY A TUNE** during the first few moments of the first lesson that comes to them to learn to play music as well as to sing any play-tune later. Remember, the **adaptability of RHYTHM** to the **variety of vocal parts** is the **key-note** of the method. The **variety of vocal parts** is the **key-note** of the method. The **variety of vocal parts** is the **key-note** of the method.
2. **Second Lesson** (10 minutes) — **PLAY A TUNE** during the first few moments of the first lesson that comes to them to learn to play music as well as to sing any play-tune later. Remember, the **adaptability of RHYTHM** to the **variety of vocal parts** is the **key-note** of the method. The **variety of vocal parts** is the **key-note** of the method. The **variety of vocal parts** is the **key-note** of the method.
3. **Third Lesson** (10 minutes) — **PLAY A TUNE** during the first few moments of the first lesson that comes to them to learn to play music as well as to sing any play-tune later. Remember, the **adaptability of RHYTHM** to the **variety of vocal parts** is the **key-note** of the method. The **variety of vocal parts** is the **key-note** of the method. The **variety of vocal parts** is the **key-note** of the method.

COLUMBIA UNIVERSITY, NEW YORK

The page is a music lesson titled "FIRST LESSON IN NOTATION". At the top, a piano keyboard diagram shows the right hand pattern (C, D, E, F, G, A, B, C) with the text "To the RIGHT of the TWO BLACK key pattern is the KEY signature." Below this, a musical staff with a treble clef shows the notes C, D, E, F, G, A, B, C, with the text "stepping up, stepping down, Then a skip." To the left of the staff is a drawing of a right hand with fingers numbered 1 to 5. To the right is a drawing of a left hand with fingers numbered 1 to 5. Below the staff, the text "FIRST LESSON IN NOTATION" is followed by "Learning to Count Step, Skip, Down, Then a Measure". The main part of the page is a large musical staff with a bass clef and a treble clef. The bass clef part is labeled "BASS CLAY DICK" and the treble clef part is labeled "TREBLE CLAY DICK". The staff is divided into measures by vertical lines, with the word "MEASURE" written below each measure. To the right of the staff, a box labeled "NOTICE" contains the text "Always play at the end of a piece of music." At the bottom left, the text "W.M.C. 4889" is visible.

Although his approach was not original, Thompson's big red books are classics. Millions of them have been unpacked from book bags, decorated with stickers, and propped open on all sorts of racks, from player pianos to digital keyboards. Some of the (probably) billions of little fingers that played Papa Haydn's Air, launched Paper Ships, and beat the Wigwam tom-toms are now arthritic. But those pages and pieces still represent a standard achieved, if now surpassed. The worldwide community of piano teachers owes JT his own Certificate of Merit. ■■

MY FIRST PIANO

NEW!

Adventure™ FOR THE YOUNG BEGINNER

by Nancy and Randall Faber

Written for ages 5 and 6, *My First Piano Adventure™* captures the child's playful spirit. Fun-filled songs, rhythm games and technique activities develop beginning keyboard skills.

The three levels, A, B, and C, each have a Lesson Book with CD and a Writing Book. Book C of this young beginner course leads into Level 1 of basic *Piano Adventures®*.



Lesson Book A, Writing Book A—Pre-Reading



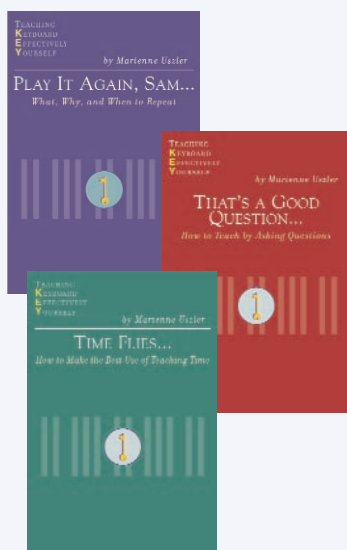
Lesson Book B
Writing Book B
Steps on the Staff



Lesson Book C
Writing Book C
Skips on the Staff

Teaching Keyboard Effectively Yourself

Marienne Uszler



Play It Again, Sam...What, Why, and When to Repeat

FF1328 / 8.95

All levels

Marienne Uszler's informative book discusses how using repetition in the studio as a practice technique can be an effective teaching strategy. *Play It Again, Sam...* offers invaluable tips you can use during your lesson time to maximize student comprehension and learning. You'll become the best teacher you can possibly be! (Size: 6 x 9 inches)

That's A Good Question...How to Teach by Asking Questions

FF1333 / 9.95

All levels

That's A Good Question discusses how asking questions in the studio can be an effective teaching strategy. This comprehensive book covers what questions to ask, and how to tailor questions to different personalities. Many examples are given to help you apply the techniques learned from this book in your teaching. (Size: 6 x 9 inches)

Time Flies...How To Make The Best Use of Teaching Time

FF1340 / 9.50

Teaching Material

Learn how to make the most of your teaching time. This comprehensive book offers a wealth of invaluable time-saving tips including: how to create a timeline, teaching listening skills, time-effective lesson plans, using computer software in your studio, planning group sessions, and more. A unique publication no music teacher should be without! (Size: 6 x 9 inches)